

Serial No. 10/649,026

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. *(Previously Presented)* A step ladder comprising
a frame including a front leg, a rear leg coupled to the front leg for pivotable movement relative to the front leg between an opened position and a collapsed position, and an alignment bracket coupled to the rear leg,
a handle,
a pivot support mount configured to support the handle for pivotable movement on the front leg about a pivot axis,
a retainer member coupled to the handle to move therewith about the pivot axis and arranged to trap a portion of the alignment bracket coupled to the rear leg between the pivot support mount and the retainer member upon movement of the handle to a predetermined position relative to the rear leg to lock the front leg to the rear leg when the front and rear legs are in the collapsed position, and
an L-shaped alignment guide immovably coupled to the front leg and configured to engage the alignment bracket coupled to the rear leg to maintain the rear leg in alignment with the front leg when the rear leg is in the collapsed position.
2. *(Previously Presented)* A step ladder comprising
a frame including a front leg and a rear leg coupled to the front leg for movement relative to the front leg between an opened position and a collapsed position,
a handle,
a pivot support mount configured to support the handle for pivotable movement on the front leg about a pivot axis,
a retainer member coupled to the handle to move therewith about the pivot axis and arranged to trap a portion of an alignment bracket coupled to the rear leg between the pivot support mount and the retainer member upon movement of the handle to a predetermined position relative to the rear leg to lock the front leg to the rear leg when the front and rear legs are in the collapsed position,
an alignment tab maintained in a fixed position relative to the rear leg and configured to engage a bottom surface of the front leg when the frame is in the collapsed position, and

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an alignment guide coupled to the pivot support mount and configured to mate with the alignment tab to maintain the rear leg in alignment with the front leg when the frame is in the collapsed position.

3. *(Original)* The step ladder of claim 2, further comprising an anchor mount coupled to the alignment tab and configured to engage a portion of the pivot support mount when the frame is in the collapsed position.

4. *(Previously Presented)* The step ladder of claim 2, wherein the alignment guide of the pivot support mount is a first alignment guide and the pivot support mount includes a second alignment guide spaced-apart from the first alignment guide, and wherein the alignment tab is positioned to lie between the first and second alignment guides of the pivot support mount when the rear leg is in the collapsed position.

5. *(Original)* The step ladder of claim 2, further comprising an alignment bracket coupled to the rear leg and formed to include the alignment tab, the alignment bracket including a base having a top wall, a bottom wall, a first side wall coupled to the top wall and the bottom wall, and a second side wall coupled to the top wall, and wherein the bottom wall, the top, bottom, first, and second side walls are formed to define an aperture configured to receive the rear leg therethrough and wherein the alignment tab is coupled to the base and is substantially in alignment with the bottom wall of the base.

6. *(Previously Presented)* A step ladder comprising
a frame including a front leg and a rear leg coupled to the front leg for pivotable movement relative to the front leg between an opened position and a collapsed position,

alignment means for aligning the front leg and the rear leg and holding the front leg and rear leg therebetween when the frame arrives in the collapsed position following pivotable movement of the rear leg relative to the front leg from the opened position to the collapsed position, and

a lock coupled to the front leg and configured to lock the rear leg to the front leg when the frame is in the collapsed position.

7. *(Currently Amended)* The step ladder of claim 6, wherein the alignment means includes an alignment guide coupled to the front leg for engagement with a bottom surface of the rear leg and an alignment bracket coupled to the rear leg for engagement with a bottom surface of the front leg ~~[[or]]~~ and alignment bracket guide when the step ladder is in the collapsed position.

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8. *(Previously Presented)* The step ladder of claim 7, wherein the alignment guide coupled to the front leg is a first alignment guide and wherein the alignment means further includes a second alignment guide coupled to the front leg and spaced-apart from the first alignment guide, and wherein the alignment bracket coupled to the rear leg positioned to lie between the first and second alignment guides coupled to the front leg when the rear leg is in the collapsed position to register the rear leg in an aligned orientation relative to the front leg.

9. *(Previously Presented)* The step ladder of claim 6, wherein the lock includes a handle, a pivot support mount configured to support the handle for pivotable movement on the front leg about a pivot axis, and a retainer member coupled to the handle to move therewith about the pivot axis and arranged to trap a portion of the alignment means coupled to the rear leg between the pivot support mount and the retainer member upon movement of the handle to a predetermined position relative to the rear leg to lock the front leg to the rear leg when the front and rear legs are in the collapsed position.

10. *(Cancelled)*.

11. *(Previously Presented)* The step ladder of claim 13, further comprising a handle coupled to the front leg for pivotable movement relative to the front leg about a pivot axis and a retainer member coupled to the handle to move therewith about the pivot axis and arranged to trap a portion of the second aligner between the rear leg and the retainer member upon movement of the handle to a predetermined position relative to the rear leg to lock the front leg to the rear leg when the rear leg is in the collapsed position.

12. *(Original)* The step ladder of claim 11, wherein the handle is coupled to the first aligner.

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13. *(Previously Presented)* A step ladder comprising
a frame including a front leg and a rear leg coupled to the front leg for pivotable movement relative to the front leg between an opened position and a collapsed position,
a first aligner coupled to the front leg and configured to engage the rear leg when the frame is in the collapsed position,
a second aligner coupled to the rear leg and configured to engage the front leg when the frame in the collapsed position, wherein the first aligner and the second aligner cooperate with each other to position the front and rear legs in registry with each other in the collapsed position, a third aligner coupled to the front leg, spaced-apart from the first aligner, and configured to cooperate with the first aligner to engage the rear leg when the rear leg is in the collapsed position, and
wherein the first and third aligners do not engage the rear leg when the frame is in the opened position.

14. *(Previously Presented)* The step ladder of claim 13, wherein the second aligner is positioned to lie between the first and third aligners when the rear leg is in the collapsed position.

15. *(Previously Presented)* The step ladder of claim 13, wherein the first aligner engages a bottom wall of the rear leg when the rear leg is in the collapsed position and the second aligner engages a bottom wall of the front leg when the rear leg is in the collapsed position.

16. *(Original)* The step ladder of claim 15, wherein the first aligner is substantially parallel to the bottom wall of front leg and the second aligner is substantially parallel to the bottom wall of the rear leg.

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17. *(Previously Presented)* A step ladder comprising
a frame including a front leg and a rear leg coupled to the front leg for movement relative to the front leg between an opened position and a collapsed position,
a first aligner coupled to the front leg and configured to engage the rear leg when the frame is in the collapsed position, and
a second aligner coupled to the rear leg and configured to engage the front leg when the frame is in the collapsed position, wherein the first aligner and the second aligner cooperate with each other to position the front and rear legs in registry with each other in the collapsed position, and
a handle coupled to the first aligner and mounted for pivotable movement about a pivot axis relative to the first aligner and an anchor mount coupled to the second aligner, the handle being formed to pivot between an unlocked position disengaged from the anchor mount and a locked position engaged with the anchor mount to retain the rear leg in a locked position relative to the front leg when the rear leg is in the collapsed position.

18. *(Previously Presented)* The step ladder of claim 13, wherein the third aligner is spaced apart from the first aligner along a length of the front leg.